

BOOKS



WHO DONE IT?

● Love a good crime novel? Can't walk past an Ian Rankin without wondering who done it? Or perhaps you fancy yourself as the next Ruth Rendell? Well, whether you're an avid crime reader or an enthusiastic writer, you'll want to knock yourself out with the lead piping if you miss Crimefest.

The international crime fiction convention will be held at the Bristol Marriott Royal Hotel on 14-17 May and features speakers such as Michael Connelly, Simon Brett (pictured) and Håkan Nesser. Visitors also get the chance to pick the brains of SW-based crime writer and recipient of the 2009 Cartier Diamond Dagger, Andrew Taylor.

Crimefest passes are £135, and include admittance to all panels. Day passes - priced £65 - will be available for Friday and Saturday. Tickets to the Featured Guest Author interviews are £12.50. All pass holders receive a canvas book bag and a souvenir programme. The event is one of the most popular dates in the crime fiction calendar and is open to readers, writers, agents and publishers from around the world.

FFI: CALL 0117 914 9639 OR 01892 532749, EMAIL INFO@CRIMEFEST.COM OR VISIT WWW.CRIMEFEST.COM

£6 (includes £6 off the book). Ffi: 01225 428111 www.toppingbooks.co.uk ● The TV choc-making star launches a new cookbook.

Frome Poetry Circle 15A Stony St, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1BU, 7.30pm, £9 incl refreshments. Ffi: 07990 973685 ● Poetry lovers welcome at this informal and friendly event.

John Hegley: Beyond Our Kennel Theatre Royal: The Ustinov, Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 1ET, 8pm, £12.50/£8.50 concs. Ffi: 01225 448844 or www.theatreroyal.org.uk/ustinov ● New poems and songs from Luton's crown prince of everyday oddity. Until Sat 25.

FRIDAY 24

Taste & The Thrifty Cookbook Theatre Royal, Sawclose, Bath, BA1 1ET, 12noon, £22 incl lunch, £10 talk only. Ffi: www.theatreroyal.org.uk ● Kate Colquhoun talks about how to make the most of food, especially leftovers, in her new book.

Claire Harman on Jane Austen

Topping & Company, The Paragon, Bath, BA1 5LS, 7.15 for 7.30pm, £5 (includes £5 off the book). Ffi: 01225 428111 or www.toppingbooks.co.uk

● The award-winning biographer talks about her new work, 'Jane's Fame: How Austen Conquered the World'.

John Hegley: Beyond Our Kennel See Thur 23.

SATURDAY 25

What it REALLY takes to be a Writer Borders Bookshop, 48-56 Queen's Rd, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1RE, 3pm, free. Ffi: 0117 922 6959 ● The myths about writers are examined by author Mike Manson and Rebecca Lloyd (2008 Bristol Short Story Prize winner).

WriteClub Borders Bookshop, 48-56 Queen's Rd, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1RE, 5.30-8pm, free. Ffi: 0117 922 6959 ● Friendly, fortnightly creative writing club - all welcome.

John Hegley: Beyond Our Kennel See Thur 23.

FAMILY



Animal magic

Anna Britten on how our local dogs and cats homes are marking RSPCA Week.

Kids love animals. The feeling might not always be mutual (ask any long-tailed mammal living with a toddler) but no critter's going to object to kids raising money for them.

Mon 27 April to Sun 3 May is the 15th RSPCA Week - the national animal welfare charity's largest annual fundraising and profile-raising event. This is a great opportunity for animal-loving families with or without pets of their own to run their fingers through the fur of a homeless mutt or moggy, while supporting the centres devoted to their care.

Bristol Cats & Dogs Home are holding a sponsored **Mutt Strutt** on the morning of Sat 2 May, inviting participants to complete a circular, one-and-a-half-hour walk around some of Bristol's landmarks with a four-legged resident. Details of how to register are on the website.

Over in Bath, staff at Bath Cats

& Dogs Home are putting together a programme of events they hope will bring in much-needed cash for a facility which since 1937 has saved tens of thousands of unwanted animals from cruelty, homelessness and destruction despite receiving no government, lottery or RSPCA funding. A sponsored **Wag Walk** along the beautiful six-mile Bath Skyline will take place on Sat 26 Apr, while on Sun 2 May the less aerobically-inclined can cosy up for a five-hour **Cat Cuddle-A-Thon**. Buy a raffle ticket while you're there for the chance to win a year's supply of dog food, a rugby ball signed by Bath Rugby Team and the chance to be a GWR DJ.

BRISTOL CATS & DOGS HOME 48 ALBERT RD, ST PHILIPS, BRISTOL, BS2 OXA. FFI: 0117 977 6043 OR WWW.BRISTOLDOGSANDCATSHOME.ORG.UK

BATH CATS & DOGS HOME THE AVENUE, CLAVERTON DOWN, BATH, BA2 7AZ. FFI: 01225 787321 OR WWW.BATHCATSANDDOGSHOME.CO.UK